

County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES

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February 21, 2006

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Bryce Yokomizo, Director

SUBJECT: **ACTION PLAN TO REDUCE CalWORKs WELFARE-TO-WORK
SANCTIONS**

This is to provide you with a status report on the implementation of the Sanction Action Plan which was provided to your Board on August 18, 2005.

Background

As you will recall, the Sanction Action Plan was created to reduce sanctions based on the report, "Study of Sanctions Among CalWORKs Participants in the County of Los Angeles: Who, When, and Why?" A collaborative process was used to develop strategies that involved managers from throughout DPSS and key partners from other County departments, service providers, advocates, and the Commission for Public Social Services. These strategies provide a comprehensive array of actions which range from computer modifications to proactive outreach to GAIN participants, and are designated as short-term, mid-term and long-term.

Strategies

The majority of the short-term actions have been fully implemented. The few remaining short-term actions have been partially completed, with full implementation scheduled for the beginning of March 2006. Many of the short-term actions involve proactively contacting participants to engage them in welfare-to-work activities. A major strategy, the GAIN Sanction Home Visit Outreach (GSHVO) project, was implemented in the non-contracted GAIN Regions on October 31, 2005. GSHVO will be implemented in the contracted Regions on March 1, 2006.

GSHVO Project

The GSHVO provides outreach to participants who are not in compliance with welfare-to-work requirements and are at risk of incurring a financial sanction, or are currently sanctioned. The purpose of the outreach is to enable a participant to cure his/her non-compliance/sanction, engage in welfare-to-work activities, and access specialized supportive services, as needed.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"

This strategy is already demonstrating success. For the period of November 2005 through December 2005, there were 2,000 contacts made either by telephone or by a home visit. Of this number, approximately 1,900 non-compliance instances (over 90%) were resolved, thereby avoiding sanctions for those participants.

Additional Strategies Targeting Outreach

In addition to the GSHVO visits, the following newly-implemented action items provide for additional outreach and intensive services:

- GAIN Services Workers (GSWs) are now calling participants to remind them of their Orientation and Appraisal appointment. These contacts are also used to motivate participants and to assist them by identifying and helping remove barriers to participation.
- GAIN participants are being contacted by staff from the Los Angeles County Office of Education to remind them of their Enhanced Job Club appointment to positively impact show rates.
- To facilitate higher levels of compliance and to promote more active engagement, specialized GSWs in each GAIN Region are now the point of contact for sanctioned participants who wish to "clear" their sanction.
- Designated GSWs in each Region are now contacting participants with expiring exemptions to discuss the need for a further exemption and/or participation in GAIN. This feature will allow for quicker, more accurate identification of persons who still may qualify for an exemption, thereby reducing the possibility for such participants to enter into non-compliance, while providing an opportunity to more quickly facilitate active engagement for those who no longer need an exemption.

Mid-Term and Long-Term Strategies

My Department continues to work on the implementation of the mid-term and long-term strategies. The mid-term actions are targeted for completion in Spring 2006. They include enhanced access to child care services and further automation improvements.

Future Reports to the Board

I will provide your Board with quarterly progress reports on the implementation of the Sanction Action Plan. The next quarterly report will provide a status of the mid-term and long-term actions, as well as a report on the early indications of the results of the short-term actions.

BY:ls

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors